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Emerging Feminist Voices on Media and Representation

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My 'Build your own adventure' project is a series of comics. These comics are about cats and dogs representing the female and male genders and how men treat females when videogames are involved.

Females make up a significant portion of videogame consumers, yet are treated vastly different as opposed to male gamers. In videogame culture, men consider themselves superior and don't realize how many females actually play the videogames. This is perhaps contributed by how females feel the need to hide their gender from others while playing videogames. If a female decides to reveal her gender to men in a videogame, she is often treated differently from that moment on because she is female. A man would never ask another man about his sex life, yet he will do it to a female through a videogame. Everyone who plays a videogame is assumed to be male until otherwise proven differently. If a woman is buying a videogame, it is usually assumed to be for her significant other or male family member. Females in the gaming culture hide their gender from others to avoid awkward questions about their bodies and sex lives, as well as to protect themselves from stalkers and people who might harass these women. Men might hit on a female in a videogame, and if she shows any disinterest she might be harassed or verbally attacked.

In videogames, women are often underrepresented. Although nearly half of videogame consumers are females, companies continue to make male dominated characters. The heroes are men. The villains are men. The people in the crowds are men. Women sometimes don't exist, and if they do, it's in a minor part. A woman is not often given the chance to play as someone her own gender in a game. Often, when a woman is represented, she is hardly clothed and is Barbie-thin with large breasts. Why would that be? Perhaps so men can look at her. Even the women in games are meant for men, not for women.

I am a digital art major who works with 3d animation, and someday I hope to get into the 3d film and gaming industry. The industry makes me feel unwelcome by the way women are treated and the way women are portrayed. If they aren't even appealing to the female audience, will I even have a chance at getting a job working with these companies? That's why I decided to use this project as a form of expression of my frustration with how women are treated when videogames are involved.

The characters in these comics are all cats and dogs. The main reason for doing so was because when creating, I wanted it to be something people won't be turned away from at first. People won't realize right away it's a comic pointing out sexism in videogames. This way someone who wouldn't normally read a comic about sexism might be pulled in. The reader might not pick up on the sexism of it at first, but instead realize that the ideas behind what the dogs are saying are rude and not appropriate. Ideally, the reader will then realize the deeper meaning behind it, and will become aware that this is something that happens and is in fact unfair. These comics were not meant to attack men, but question these actions men have toward women.